News Release
Communiqué

Ontario

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée

For Immediate Release
May 22, 2007
2007/nr-118

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT REDUCING HEALTH CARE WAIT TIMES

New Wait Time Data Shows Double-Digit Drops in the Central Area

TORONTO – New data shows the Ontario government's Wait Time Strategy is resulting in decreases in wait times for key health services in the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) area, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Trends in the Central LHIN area are remarkable with significant decreases in wait times for a number of key health services," Smitherman said. "Through the leadership and hard work of thousands of front line health professionals, the Wait Time Strategy is clearly achieving real results for patients by improving access to care, closer to home."

As a result of the government's Wait Time Strategy, wait times in which nine out of 10 patients have completed their surgery or have had their exam in the Central LHIN area have decreased significantly since August/September 2005 by:

- 51.9 per cent for cataract surgery (138 days)
- 44.4 per cent for knee replacement (199 days)
- 44.4 per cent for MRI scans (67 days)
- 25.6 per cent for cardiac bypass surgery (12 days)
- 11.6 per cent for CT scans (eight days).

Wait times for other key health services have also declined by:

- 4.3 per cent for hip replacement (12 days).

Cancer surgery is also below the access target set by the government in December, 2005.

At the same time, Smitherman acknowledged one health service area that remains a challenge – there has been a 76.4 per cent increase in wait times in angiography services since August/September 2005.

"We continue to make significant investments in angiography services and we expect to see improvements in wait times for this area," Smitherman said.

Since the launch of the Wait Time Strategy, the Ontario government has invested $76,981,190 for additional procedures in hospitals in the Central LHIN area, including:

- 10,277 cataract surgeries ($ 7,439,750)
- 10,983 cardiac procedures ($20,959,650)
- 4,103 hip and knee joint replacements ($29,547,994)
- 1,330 cancer surgeries ($7,273,776)

- 35,016 hours, 52,524 exams MRI ($11,098,420)
- 2,646 hours, 9,261 exams CT ($661,600).

The new wait time data is available at www.ontariowaittimes.com, which is closing in on nearly 4 million hits as of today.

"Wait times is one of the seven planning priorities identified in our Integrated Health Service Plan," said Ken Morrison, Chair of the Central LHIN Board of Directors. "We appreciate the government's continuing wait time investments in Central LHIN. Our hospitals are being provided resources to improve services in our communities, which will give us the opportunity to achieve even more success in the future."

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait time and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

-30-

Media Contacts:

Jeff Rohrer
Minister's Office
416-326-8016

David Jensen
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: 1-866-532-3161.

This news release, along with other media materials, such as matte stories and audio clips, on other subjects, are available on our website at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca under the News Media section.

For more information on achievements in health care, visit: www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca.

Disponible en français.